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# Hint Cuban Deal Near for Captives

## RANSOM PILE

Supplies worth 53 millions being collected for Cuban ransom. Story on page 2.

HAVANA, Cuba, Dec. 19 (UPI)

James B. Donovan, New York attorney, said today he would return to Miami immediately with Fidel Castro's reply to an offer to ransom 1,113 Cuban invasion prisoners with food and drugs worth millions and being donated by United States firms in a massive mercy operation.

Donovan's announcement strengthened prevailing belief the ransom talks were on the verge of successful conclusion. Donovan added to the air of optimism by saying he would return to Havana tomorrow.

## Statement by Donovan

A Donovan statement issued here at noon said:

"The [negotiating] mission met last evening with Premier Castro and other high government officials. A preliminary list of medicine and drugs already contributed to the American Red Cross was submitted. "It is being studied by the [Castro] government and an analysis prepared. Mr. Donovan will return to Miami today with the government analysis and to obtain the latest list of additional contributions. He plans to return to Havana tomorrow."

Reliable sources said that only Cuban verification that Donovan's list of ransom supplies jibed with Castro's original list was holding up the release of the men taken prisoner, after the abortive April, 1961, Bay of Pigs invasion.

## Hint Announcement Near

A source close to the negotiators hinted the agreement freeing the men might be announced momentarily.

[Associated Press reported from Havana that an official of a committee of prisoners' mothers said that Premier Fidel Castro "shares negotiators' high hopes" for a quick exchange of prisoners for United States food and medicines. This informant said conversation was very favorable in talks between Castro and a negotiating team led by Donovan. Mrs. Berta Barreto of Havana, one of the four negotiators, was told by telephone this morning: "Tell your husband your son will soon be free."]

Castro originally demanded 62 million dollars in cash for the prisoners. It was believed the food and drugs would be close to that amount when transportation costs were figured in.

Reports from outside Cuba indicated that a cruise ship might be used to take the invasion prisoners to an unidentified Caribbean island for interviews and medical examinations, after which they would be flown to Miami.

There was no indication of when the prisoners would be released but reports from

Washington said the Red Cross chartered 10,000-ton Farrell Lines freighter, African Pilot, would leave Florida today night or Saturday morning for Havana with ransom goods.

The reports from abroad also indicated a sharp stop in activity in many United States industrial centers with air lines, railroads, and trucking concerns joining in a massive effort to get the ransom goods into Florida warehouses before the weekend.

In Hamburg, Germany, a spokesman for the Hamburg shipping line said the company had agreed to furnish the cruise liner Wappen Von Hamburg under charter to a Bahamas firm to transport the prisoners. The ship was believed to have been renamed the Empress of the Bahamas and to be engaged in cruise trips between Miami and Nassau.

A spokesman for the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers association in New York said 35 to

40 manufacturers agreed to supply the drugs which Castro specifically asked for by brand name and maker. The drugs were contributed free of charge, but the United States government said the firms would be eligible for tax deductions under the law.

Air lines, railroads, steamship lines, and trucking firms also contributed their transport facilities. Maritime unions donated the labor needed to transport the goods to Havana.

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